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Formative evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative

Executive summary**

Summary

Over the past few decades, considerable effort has gone into making education accessible and to creating opportunities for all children and young people. Still, it is estimated that there is a "100-year gap" between education levels and outcomes in developing countries and those in developed countries.[a] Gaps in enrolment, completion and learning rates persist, mostly because there are too many children who come to school lacking the preparation they need to succeed, while a substantial number are left out of the education ecosystem altogether. The mission of the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) is to draw attention to the situation of these children, and to both challenge and support partner countries to accelerate programming on their behalf. OOSCI has, to some extent, been successful in this.

Launched in 2010, OOSCI is a partnership between UNICEF, the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Global Partnership for Education. The initiative is aimed at supporting Governments to develop and apply innovative approaches to better estimate the number of children excluded from educational opportunities, identify these children and develop solutions to bring them back to school.

The theory of change for OOSCI postulates that the provision of detailed data and evidence on why children are out of school, coupled with extensive advocacy efforts, will prompt Governments to implement the changes in their educational systems necessary to bring children into school and to achieve the stated goal of OOSCI: a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children who are out of school.

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** The executive summary of the evaluation report is being circulated in all official languages. The full report is available in English from the UNICEF Evaluation Office website (see annex).

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The present evaluation of OOSCI was commissioned in 2017 and concluded in 2018. Evidence of the contribution of UNICEF and that of partners was derived through a qualitative design, including secondary data analysis; an online survey administered to all UNICEF country offices implementing OOSCI; and interviews and focus group discussions at the country and global levels. Evidence was also generated through the qualitative comparative analysis method: investigating the different contextual conditions in which OOSCI was implemented and the combinations of factors that would make the reduction of the number of out-of-school children more likely in one context and less likely in another.

The evaluation findings show that OOSCI has been instrumental in situating issues of out-of-school children at the centre of the development agenda at the national and international levels. Some level of advocacy on and commitment to these issues is shown around processes of setting priorities and formulating sector plans. However, this has not been matched by the allocation of adequate resources on a sustainable basis, and it is not always clear if all partners fully embrace the "rights-based" model of education underpinning OOSCI.

Recommendations include (a) updating the theory of change for OOSCI to reflect the key elements that will make inclusiveness of all groups of out-of-school children possible, while also focusing on identifying strategies and policies to promote participation at the preschool level; (b) expanding technical capabilities for effective implementation and comprehensive monitoring; (c) expanding the OOSCI partner base to give more voice to non-traditional partners at the local level, while maintaining a clear focus on the results they are expected to deliver; and (d) strengthening programmatic elements to yield, in a future evaluation, more-confident estimates of the OOSCI contribution towards the reduction of the number of out-of-school children.

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section V.

[a] Robinson, Jenny Perlman and others, "Millions learning: scaling up quality education in developing countries", Brookings Institution (Washington, D.C., 2016). Available from www.brookings.edu/research/millions-learning-scaling-up-quality-education-in-developing-countries.

I. Background and purpose of the evaluation

1. The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) is a partnership between UNICEF, the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Global Partnership for Education.[1] It was launched in 2010 with the aim of supporting Governments to develop and apply innovative approaches to better estimate the number of children excluded from educational opportunities, to identify these children and to develop solutions to extend learning opportunities to them. Other OOSCI partners are the International Labour Organization and the World Bank, which both supported OOSCI work through another initiative, Understanding Children's Work.[2]

2. At its inception in 2010, OOSCI was being implemented in 25 partner countries; by the end of 2016, that number had risen to 87. The initiative is organized around three programme objectives, namely:

(a) To develop the capacity and robust processes for deriving profiles of out-of-school children and to analyse barriers that have led to these children's exclusion;

(b) To identify and implement effective policies and strategies to reduce the number of out-of-school children, and to integrate the necessary changes within education-sector plans to ensure their sustainability;

(c) To bring to the issue of out-of-school children greater international attention and enhanced advocacy that will translate into commitments (national and international) to ensure that all children have access to school.

3. In 2013, the Global Partnership for Education provided a grant to the initiative to bring greater awareness to the work being done globally on the issue of out-of-school children and to accelerate progress in achieving the objectives of OOSCI.

4. OOSCI uses an evidence-based approach to advocate for policies, strategies and budgeting practices aimed at addressing the problem of out-of-school children. In an OOSCI study, data are typically collected from diverse sources, e.g., education and health systems, regional and population surveys, which are used to estimate the number of children who are out of school and to create profiles that describe the different groups of out-of-school children.[3] Over time, a unified concept of out-of-school children was articulated (the five dimensions of exclusion) to capture some of the nuances of the problem and to highlight the need for different strategies to address different categories of out-of-school children.

5. The main outputs of the initiative are regional and national OOSCI studies aimed at developing the capacities of national partners to undertake supplemental evidence-generation activities to identify the key issues and barriers that impede progress in access to and the completion of basic education. Evidence from OOSCI studies helps to raise awareness of the negative consequences of education exclusion

[1] The Global Partnership for Education formally joined the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) in 2013.

[2] Anchored by the International Labour Organization, UNICEF and the World Bank, the Understanding Children's Work initiative brings together leading academics, policymakers, practitioners and donors to conduct research and develop policies and solutions in the area of child labour and youth employment.

[3] Three terms are used to further describe the school status of children. "Visible children" refers to children appearing in Ministry of Education's databases. This usually does not include out-of-school children). "Semi-visible children" refers to those appearing in other databases (e.g., Ministry of Health) and who could be identified if the databases were linked. "Invisible children" refers to children who do not appear in any database, such as children working and/or living on the street or those from nomadic communities.

and underpins advocacy work with decision makers. It also provides the basis for recommending changes in government policies or strategies to reduce or eliminate barriers and to enable more children to access and complete at least the basic education cycle. It is assumed that the recommendations of OOSCI studies accurately reflect and respond to the barriers and present solutions that are politically, financially and technically feasible to implement.

6. A formative evaluation of OOSCI was commissioned in 2017 and completed in 2018. The purpose of the evaluation was to test the validity of the programme theory of change and its assumptions, to provide a formative assessment of progress towards the achievement of the overall goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children and to strengthen the programme logic. Three objectives defined in the evaluation terms of reference were as follows:

(a) To examine the efficacy of strategies supported by UNICEF towards realizing the goal of universal participation in basic education[4] and to determine whether pathways to reaching the intended goal were articulated clearly and were aligned with those of key partners;

(b) To determine the extent to which OOSCI studies generated credible evidence on out-of-school children, influenced key policy changes and facilitated the selection of effective strategies and interventions for various programming contexts, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming;

(c) To assess the UNICEF contribution to building individual and institutional capacities to address barriers to entering and staying in school, assess the adequacy of those contributions and evaluate efforts to build the capacities of key partners.

7. The evaluation covers the entire period of OOSCI implementation, from its inception in 2010 through the 2016 reporting period.

8. Organized around OOSCI programme outcomes descriptive and normative evaluation questions are presented in annex 1. The evaluation addresses the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as promulgated by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC). It also addresses two additional criteria: coherence, to enable the assessment of the formative aspects of OOSCI and the evolving nature of some concepts and tools, and utility.

A. Scope

9. The evaluation covered all OOSCI partner countries whose studies were completed and/or adopted by their respective Governments by the end of 2016, estimated at 40 out of 87 countries. Countries were spread throughout all UNICEF regions. Partner countries were at different stages of OOSCI implementation (conducting studies, policy-level work, etc.). The evaluation also covered the inputs and activities of the OOSCI core partners, that is, the respective Governments, UNICEF, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Partnership for Education.

B. Evaluation use

10. The aim of the evaluation was to facilitate reflection and learning among education managers responsible for programming around out-of-school children in all partner countries and participating agencies. Also, implementation strategies to

[4] Basic education: primary and lower secondary education (International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 1-2, i.e., ISCED-Programmes).

improve programme coherence are anticipated. Policy makers and government counterparts are expected to use evidence from the evaluation to deepen their understanding of the issues faced by out-of-school children at all levels of their education systems as well as to mobilize stakeholders in other sectors.

II. Evaluation approach

11. A theory-based design was employed for the evaluation. The theory of change for OOSCI postulates that the provision of detailed data and evidence on why children are out of school, coupled with extensive advocacy efforts, will prompt Governments to implement the changes in their education systems necessary to bring children into school and to achieve the stated goal of OOSCI: a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children.

12. Evidence of the contributions of UNICEF and partners was derived through a qualitative design. Sources included (a) a desk-based review of secondary data analysis; (b) an online survey administered to education programme officers in all UNICEF country offices implementing OOSCI; (c) interviews and focus group discussions with a sample of respondents in UNICEF headquarters in New York as well as regional education advisers and/or OOSCI focal points in all seven UNICEF regional offices; and (d) interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders at the country level during the course of the field visits.[5]

13. Evidence was also generated through a qualitative comparative analysis.[6] This analysis was used to investigate the different contextual conditions under which OOSCI was implemented and combinations of factors that would make a reduction in the number of out-of-school children more likely in one context and less likely in another. Finally, survey data were subjected to descriptive analyses (e.g., mean values, standard deviations). These analyses were mainly used for triangulation with an additional data source and to substantiate the qualitative findings with a larger empirical base.

III. Selected findings, conclusions and evaluative assessment

14. Approaches to bring as many children and young people as possible into school have taken many forms, including grassroots lobbying for the importance of schooling, political declarations for universal access to education, initiatives to abolish school fees and the introduction of pro-poor education financing frameworks in many countries. Despite these efforts, too many children still await the opportunity to access and participate in schooling.

A. Progress towards universal basic education

15. Universal basic education provides a good starting point and a possible signal of political commitment to solving the problem of out-of-school children. Therefore, the evaluation investigated whether universal access to basic education was a documented goal in partner countries, with the following findings:

(a) Declarations of universal basic education, express or implied, were found in government documents for the majority of OOSCI partner countries (80 per cent),

[5] Field visits were conducted to selected OOSCI partner countries (Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Romania, Nepal, the Sudan and Zimbabwe and the UNICEF regional office in Nepal). The purpose of the field visits was to validate preliminary judgements and findings from the other data sources.

[6] For a more detailed description of the qualitative comparative analysis approach, see Charles C. Ragin, *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008).

signaling a strong intent to eliminate the problem of children being out of school. Also, OOSCI was credited with having brought both a positive attitudinal change to government partners on the subject of out-of-school children and new energy and a new push for prioritizing programmes around issues facing out-of-school children in UNICEF country offices;

(b) With nearly 70 per cent of the countries having executed or completed an OOSCI study, the Middle East and North Africa region maintained an intense focus on OOSCI and issues relating to out-of-school children. These efforts were beginning to show dividends, in both terms of targeting different groups of out-of-school children and in the variety of solutions for out-of-school children;

(c) These successes notwithstanding, one of the key messages of the evaluation is that while countries generally demonstrated a commitment to be inclusive, many OOSCI countries often conflated "inclusive education" with special education programmes. Because of this lack of conceptual clarity, interventions failed to address the exclusion of specific groups of out-of-school children;

(d) The links between the stated goals and objectives and the proposed and/or implemented strategies for universal basic education were often inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory. Further, subnational authorities often lacked the data and/or evidence required to make a strong push for investing in education and/or to devote the necessary time and resources to inclusion strategies.

16. Cumulatively, these findings point to the need to revisit what it means for access to and the provision of basic education to be truly universal and to update the conception of universal basic education. Increasingly, universal basic education is understood in the development community to mean "[providing] the greatest support to individuals who have the greatest need, while maintaining an element of universality that reflects the shared investment citizens make in education as taxpayers." [7] Conclusion 1 challenges OOSCI to address the problem of out-of-school children from similar conceptual underpinnings.

Conclusion 1

17. Universal basic education is still a unifying goal and message for galvanizing the education sector to maintain high enrolments and completion rates. Beyond these measures of participation and efficiency, universal basic education is increasingly being reconceptualized to include equity and inclusiveness, meaning that education resources should also be allocated to achieve progressive universalism, i.e., to combine a commitment to providing education for every child with more resources devoted to children who need the most help. [8] Adopting a formal definition of universal basic education to reflect this thinking would strengthen both the linkages between the objectives of OOSCI, UNICEF advocacy and resource mobilization efforts and other work around out-of-school children and the overarching goal of improving education outcomes for all children.

[7] Ian Diamond, "Review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements in Wales", (Cardiff, Welsh Government, 2016). Available from http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/160927-he-review-final-report-en.pdf.

[8] International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, "The Learning generation: investing in education for a changing world" (undated).

B. Evidence generation and the utility of Out-of-School Children Initiative studies

18. The OOSCI Operational Manual articulates five dimensions of exclusion. The first three dimensions provide descriptions of children who are old enough to go to school, but are not enrolled or attending, while dimensions 4 and 5 describe children at risk of dropping out of school:

(a) Dimension 1: Children of pre-primary age who are not in pre-primary or primary school;

(b) Dimension 2: Children of primary school age (i) who are not in primary school; (ii) who attended but dropped out; and/or (iii) who will never enter or will enter late;

(c) Dimension 3: Children of lower-secondary school age (i) who are not in primary or secondary school; (ii) who attended but dropped out; and/or (iii) who will never enter or will enter late;

(d) Dimension 4: Children in primary school who are at risk of dropping out;

(e) Dimension 5: Children in lower-secondary school who are at risk of dropping out.

19. As a prerequisite, partner countries were supposed to ascertain, through their studies, whether the dimensions of exclusion described above fit the profiles of out-of-school children in their contexts, and to develop more-comprehensive profiles where necessary. Studies were also expected to identify barriers that kept children from accessing formal education and to propose strategies to address barriers that, if mitigated or eliminated, would result in a reduction in the number of out-of-school children. The evaluation found the following:

(a) OOSCI studies executed in partner countries were effective in generating profiles of out-of-school children and identifying barriers that prevent children from enrolling in school, cause them to drop out and/or prevent them from re-entering school appropriately. The table presented in annex 1 shows a range of barriers that impede children. Children's economic background (i.e., family wealth and having to participate in earning a livelihood) was cited by 92.1 per cent of respondents as a barrier with high/very high prevalence, followed at 75.4 per cent by personal physical characteristics of children (e.g., gender, age, disability);

(b) Also illustrated in annex 1 are barriers that were cited as being least responsible for keeping children away from school. These include personal history (e.g., history of traumatization, civil war experience) and school culture and/or rules of behaviour. The fact that personal history was cited as a barrier of lower prevalence signals that children are indeed resilient, possibly because of programming aimed at their well-being and rehabilitation. Also, for school culture to be cited as the least-prevalent barrier seems to suggest that children, presumably with their parents' involvement, are not being deterred from participating in school by matters such as rules of behaviour;

(c) OOSCI studies have included more-detailed analyses than previous studies, providing countries with baselines to use for monitoring progress towards more inclusive basic education;

(d) The five dimensions of exclusion as articulated by OOSCI were not adequate to describe all profiles of out-of-school children. The evaluation also found that the upper-secondary school population should be included in the OOSCI methodological framework to make it more responsive to different country contexts;

(e) Many children are out of school for reasons that cut across the five dimensions of exclusion as articulated in the OOSCI methodological framework. Also, barriers are multifaceted; some barriers can be addressed by making improvements to the education system, while others fall under the authority of other sectors, such as health and social protection;

(f) OOSCI has contributed positively to increasing the visibility of the subject of out-of-school children in education development discourse, policy dialogue and agenda-setting.

Conclusion 2

20. OOSCI studies have laid an important foundation in the development of comprehensive profiles of out-of-school children in each country and the identification of barriers. However, the analysis of barriers needs to be contextualized and updated periodically to remain responsive to the needs of different groups of out-of-school children.

21. The second set of findings on evidence generation confirms the hypothesis promulgated by OOSCI, namely that:

(a) If countries invest in generating complete profiles of out-of-school children, and identify and address the barriers that keep them from school and mitigate them, then a reduction in the number of children who are out of school would be realized, but only in countries with (i) a low human development index; and/or (ii) countries that are stable;

(b) According to a qualitative comparative analysis, in countries that were not successful in generating complete profiles of out-of-school children or in identifying and addressing barriers that keep children from school, reductions in the number of out-of-school children were still realized in countries that were relatively prosperous (using a high human development index ranking as a proxy for prosperity) and were judged as stable (i.e., fragile States index score of 60 or less).

22. While there may be additional factors that would bring even greater success in reducing the number of out-of- chool children, the qualitative comparative analysis confirmed that identifying profiles and generating recommendations that clearly address barriers are necessary first steps to a reduction in the number of out-of-school children.

Conclusion 3

23. Evidence and policy guidance from OOSCI studies have become a useful resource for planning processes in education departments and for education sector partners. To the extent that the initiative has gained acceptance in partner countries, OOSCI is well positioned to push important messages, such as the value of stability in terms of a lack of conflict and a productive economic environment, and to provide support to turn those messages into action tailored for different programming contexts.

24. The third set of findings, on utility, indicates a need for course correction:

(a) In most cases, OOSCI studies were successful in generating data to estimate the number of out-of-school children. However, these figures were often contested, resulting in some countries being reluctant to release their studies for public consumption;

(b) The degree to which baselines were being monitored and/or compared with follow-up data differed greatly among countries, depending on human resource

capacities and the availability of funding for maintaining complex data collection systems;

(c) While OOSCI studies were successful in generating recommendations to address key issues affecting out-of-school children, the recommended actions were sometimes tenuous in terms of addressing the most prevalent barriers and bottlenecks, and at times not feasible and/or actionable. As a result, solutions for eliminating the barriers that keep children away from school were not prioritized on the agendas of a significant number of OOSCI partner countries.

Conclusion 4

25. While the contribution of UNICEF and OOSCI partners has led to discernible progress and changes in policies and planning, a gap between policy and planning, on one hand, and implementation, on the other, remains, mainly because of the inadequate prioritization of issues facing out-of-school children. The evaluation concluded that a new advocacy effort around out-of-school children is required. Also required is the prioritization of solutions and/or interventions for the most disadvantaged subgroups of out-of-school children and a resourcing model for issues facing all such children.

C. Partnerships to advance programming for out-of-school children

26. The findings on OOSCI partnerships relate first to the "core partners" (UNICEF, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Partnership for Education), and include the following:

(a) OOSCI partnership arrangements and the division of tasks among the core partners were considered to be cohesive and productive and to have increased the efficiency of a majority of implementers, while the contribution of all OOSCI partners was credited with having expanded geographical coverage of activities and interventions for out-of-school children. This outcome was highly valued by participating Governments;

(b) OOSCI is credited with having created a higher demand for technical and policy advice around issues affecting out-of-school children, and to have increased opportunities for face-to-face interaction with decision makers.

27. The slate of partners involved in the work around out-of-school children indicated that the government sector dominates the discourse in this area. It is understandable that Government, as a duty-bearer, should be accountable for enacting policy and planning for and delivering services, and should be fully represented in the discussion around out-of-school children. However, the evaluation also found that:

(a) OOSCI non-governmental partners were not diverse enough. National civil society organizations were underrepresented in the work around out-of-school children in comparison with international non-governmental organizations. Also, the roles and results expected from this category of partners were not clearly defined;

(b) OOSCI was highly valued by smaller non-governmental organization partners whose views are rarely represented in policy debates, and who regarded the opportunity to work alongside OOSCI as reclaiming their "voice".

28. While the initiative's partnership approach was still evolving, the low participation of national civil society organizations suggested that some key constituencies might be missing from this important dialogue. The absence from the policy table of some constituencies could mean that policies enacted as a result of OOSCI may not only perpetuate exclusion, but could institutionalize it.

Conclusion 5

29. In an operating environment subject to frequent changes in government staffing, shifting donor resources and the continuous movement of people, UNICEF was regarded by all actors as a constant factor and a reliable "anchor partner"; its convening power helped to move partnership objectives forward.

D. Strengthening education systems and capacities

30. One of the programme objectives of OOSCI was to address the capacity gap for both individuals and education systems. For instance, OOSCI was credited with having contributed to substantial improvement in data collection systems in a handful of countries, and in one country was credited with spurring enhancements to the national education management information system (EMIS) that enabled it to track out-of-school children. For the remaining partner countries, the findings of the evaluation indicate the following:

(a) Half of the countries sampled for the document review phase of the evaluation demonstrated only modest success in the improvement of data systems and processes, while commendable success was registered in only a small number of countries;

(b) The availability of robust and reliable data was highly inconsistent, mostly because of limitations in financial and human resource capacities for data collection, analysis, interpretation and related processes;

(c) Except for a few isolated cases, coordination and/or collaboration between different sectors and line ministries regarding out-of-school children was not systematic;

(d) The rigid application of the five dimensions of exclusion approach and the weak alignment and complementarity of inputs from different sectors of Government have resulted in groups of out-of-school children affected by religious, ethnic and other forms of discrimination being shut out of OOSCI and other targeted support from UNICEF.

31. While there has been a reduction in the number of children that are out of school since the inception of OOSCI, it is not possible to attribute this change to OOSCI and/or UNICEF activities by means of a quantifiable contribution. However, a robust contribution analysis to explain the factors that account for the reduction in the number of out-of-school children is methodologically possible, and is required to sustain the evaluability of OOSCI.

32. While OOSCI activities have contributed positively in some instances, the initiative has fallen short on sustainability. Governments remain highly constrained in implementation capacities for just about every aspect of the education sector. Also, there is a need for greater efficiencies between different sectors with a mandate for serving vulnerable children, with out-of-school children being only a subset of this category. The capacity to identify and serve all children, including developing profiles of all children who are excluded from school, have been strengthened, but not in a sustainable way.

33. With OOSCI support, Governments should be assisted to reimagine and reengineer EMIS and similar processes such that they can have a radar on all children, all the time, including those who periodically enter and exit formal education systems, either because they are too poor to stay in school or are compelled to exit one school system and enter another due to conflict or other destabilizing factors.

Conclusion 6

34. Technical capacities to identify and serve all children, including all those excluded from school, were strengthened. However, improvements were confined to

individual capacities and did not permeate the system. As such, the gains from OOSCI will not be sustainable in the long run unless the next generation of OOSCI studies concentrates greater effort on supporting Governments to achieve systemic changes.

E. Evaluative assessment

35. In the few years that the initiative has been operational, OOSCI has proven its relevance, effectiveness and utility, particularly in stable contexts in which it has been able to take root. However, while the initiative has some internal coherence, additional conceptualization and inputs are required to improve its external coherence and sustainability, and to extend its reach, relevance and utility within more challenging and complex programming contexts, including in fragile States and countries with humanitarian programming.

36. Generally, however, evidence from OOSCI studies has enhanced national capacities for mapping the profiles of out-of-school children, as well as for analysing the complex and multisectoral barriers that impede access or constrain the completion of basic education. However, as noted above, adequate attention has not been given to barriers that involve religious, ethnic, political or ideological discrimination in society.

37. Overall, the evaluation findings show that OOSCI has been instrumental in situating issues of out-of-school children at the centre of the development agenda at the national and international levels. Some level of advocacy and commitment to these issues is shown around the processes of setting priorities and formulating sector plans. However, this has not been matched by the allocation of adequate resources on a sustainable basis, and it is not always clear if all partners fully embrace the "rights-based" model of education underpinning OOSCI. Table 1 examines the value of OOSCI more systematically under the OECD/DAC criteria.

Table 1

Evaluative assessment of the Out-of-School Children Initiative using criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criterion	DAC definition	Assessment
1. Relevance	Assesses whether the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) is in line with local needs and priorities and consistent with intended effects	OOSCI was found to be relevant to national and international debates on equity in development. By highlighting the plight of out-of-school children, even as countries celebrate gains in enrolment rates and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals, it has raised issues of equity and fairness as well as the rights of children in the quest to make full use of the human resource potential of countries. In addition, through policy dialogue and strategic support, OOSCI has enhanced its relevance in helping to shape national priorities and to formulate robust sector plans that embrace education as a right for all children.
2. Effectiveness	Measures the extent to which OOSCI has achieved its purpose or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of outputs	In most countries, OOSCI has been effective in [illegible] national stakeholders who were ready to support the shift from targeted community interventions to an effective systemic approach with regard to out-of-school children. Consequently, an effective and inclusive process of policymaking and priority-setting around out-of-school issues has been triggered at the macro level. However, OOSCI has been less effective in supporting countries to translate recommended policies and strategies into concrete practice.
3. Efficiency	Measures the ratio of outputs achieved to the total inputs contributed (cost efficiency timeliness) in comparison to other alternatives	By being embedded in priority-setting processes, developing sector plans and mobilizing resources, OOSCI partner agencies have contributed efficiently to measures that address key challenges posed by the problem of out-of-school children in target countries. Efficiency could be improved by keeping all OOSCI partners engaged by assigning more roles and tasks, and through deeper collaboration between OOSCI partners. This would enable partners to better "deliver as one" in providing their support for measures that help to translate policies, plans and priorities into concrete achievements on issues pertaining to out-of-school children. In this regard, marshalling the research capacities of a partner such as Understanding Children's Work and allocating specific tasks to the group should increase the efficiencies of OOSCI.
4. Utility	Assesses the ability of a service to satisfy the needs or wants of the target group(s)	The utility of OOSCI is linked to availability of resources on a sustainable basis. Without such sustainable resources, the problem of out-of-school children will persist or worsen, no matter how many studies and strategic plans the initiative generates for any given country.
5. Coherence	Assesses consistency in approach and whether policies and guidance take into account standards and human rights considerations	Barriers to universal education are complicated and intertwined. Hence, the ability to deliver a comprehensive national, regional and global response depends upon the sound interrogation of concepts and claims about what OOSCI can deliver. In that regard, OOSCI was internally coherent enough to be functional it its formative phase. As end users begin to expect more of OOSCI, additional work will be required to make it conceptually sound and to coordinate effectively across sectors and among stakeholders.

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criterion	*DAC definition*	*Assessment*
		The external coherence of OOSCI has also been low because of weak cross-sectoral coordination and the failure to attract the necessary non-traditional partners. There is still a need to improve coordination, strengthen leadership on programming and seek out and engage with less prominent significant partners.
6. Sustainability	Assesses if the achievement of the goals can be maintained by the respective systems' resources and services, and if the benefits of an intervention can continue after the end of donor funding	Sustainability depends not only on the availability of resources at the country level, but also on the political will and commitment of Governments and partners to a rights-based model of education. Resources facilitate the implemeniation of feasible solutions and commitment drives efforts towards the progressive realization of basic education for all. Resources and commitments are not yet at levels that would enable sustainability in addressing the challenges posed by out-of-school children. This is particularly the case for domestic resources, implying a need for long-term external support.

IV. Recommendations and management response

38. The recommendations draw from the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. They are aimed at proposing and justifying, from a long menu of possible solutions, key actions that will shape the thinking of OOSCI and partners on how to configure and/or package their support to partner countries in order to achieve the shared goal of accelerating a reduction in the number of out-of-school children.

39. . The recommendations are addressed to all OOSCI partners, but their execution targets UNICEF as the lead partner. Selected members from the reference group were invited to validate the recommendations, first to determine whether they were based on the findings of the evaluation and were well-targeted and actionable and, second, to determine whether the required follow-up actions were practical and/or feasible. UNICEF management considered and accepted all the recommendations; their response to each recommendation is summarized below.

Recommendation 1: Revise/update the theory of change for the Out-of-School Children Initiative

40. The theory of change for OOSCI should be revised to reflect the key elements of inclusion to ensure that the needs of all out-of-school children are met at all levels of the basic education cycle, while ensuring that the initiative focuses on identifying strategies and policies that empower Governments to eliminate the lack of participation at the pre-primary level, such as sustainable, pro-poor financing for the subsector.

Recommendation 2: Expand technical capabilities for effective implementation and comprehensive monitoring

41. OOSCI should expand its focus to harness the expertise and capabilities of OOSCI technical partners to seek effective and efficient strategies and solutions that support the implementation and comprehensive monitoring of policies in key contexts in which programming for different profiles of out-of-school children occurs and to attract resources to ascertain the sustainability of implementation.

Recommendation 3: Reorient the Out-of-School Children Initiative to cover the entire basic education cycle and all profiles of out-of-school learners

42. The methodological framework for OOSCI should be reoriented towards the entire basic education cycle (i.e., pre-primary through upper-secondary) and target key vulnerable groups that cut across all profiles of out-of-school children. It should generate explicit strategies that address the learning needs of these groups, including but not limited to embracing appropriate forms of learning for them and responsive modalities for delivering those learning opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Expand the partner base for the Out-of-School Children Initiative to make it inclusive, while maintaining a focus on results

43. While maintaining the usual focus on supporting Governments to discharge their mandate to extend learning opportunities to all children, OOSCI should facilitate processes for assembling the right type of partners, including but not limited to government officials, that have a clear potential to bring new ideas and/or offer new entry points for programming for out-of-school children.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen programmatic elements to yield evaluable information on the contribution of the Out-of-School Children Initiative to the reduction in the number of out-of-school children

44. OOSCI should strengthen all its programmatic elements to set up the initiative to yield evaluable information on the stated goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children. This includes ascertaining the internal and external coherence of the initiative and the feasibility of achieving the intended results and ensuring that adequate monitoring and evaluation inputs and systems are put in place to enable systematic assessments of the OOSCI contribution.

V. Draft decision

The Executive Board

Takes note of the following documents presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2019:

(a) Formative evaluation of the Out-Of-School Children Initiative, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/3) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/4);

(b) Independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/5) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/6).

Annex I

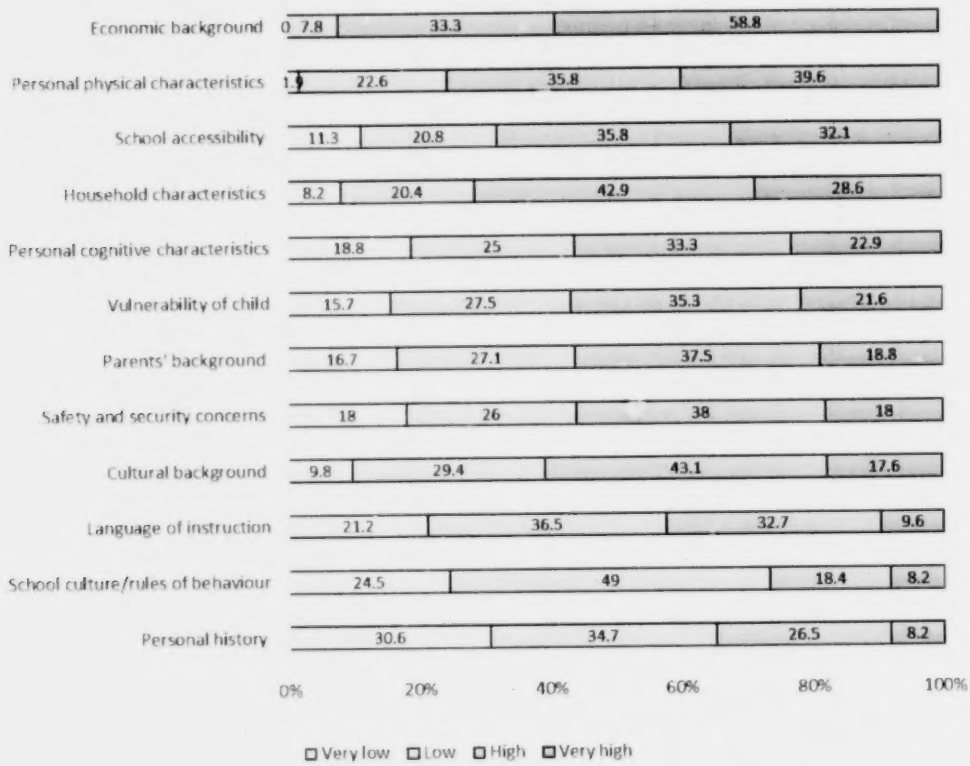
Evaluation questions, by evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria	*Evaluation questions*
Relevance and coherence	1.1 To what extent is universal access to basic education specified as a goal, outcome or result for OOSCI partner countries? (Descriptive)
	1.2 Have OOSCI partner countries articulated clear and coherent strategies, inputs and outputs towards the outcome universal access to basic education? (Descriptive)
	1.3 What are the different ways in which countries have engaged in OOSCI, and how much progress has been made towards achieving OOSCI objectives (Descriptive)
	1.4 Does support from partners constitute a clear added-value to government efforts in providing access to basic education? (Normative)
	1.5 How has each of the OOSCI core partners (national Governments, UNICEF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute of Statistics, Global Partnership for Education, Understanding Children's Work) contributed to the initiative, and what efficiencies have been realized as a result of that division of responsibilities? (Descriptive and normative)
	1.6 Is there alignment and complementarity between government efforts, UNICEF support and support of key partners in providing access to basic education? (Normative)
Effectiveness and utility	2.1 How effective were OOSCI studies in generating accurate profiles of children that are out of school and associated barriers (family, societal systemic/structural, etc.)? (Normative)
	2.2 What are the different types of effects that were realized by OOSCI studies and the political, financial and technical conditions that made those effects possible in some contexts and not others? (Descriptive)
	2.3 What is the significance of those effects in terms of coverage and/or reach, in both development and humanitarian contexts? (Normative)
	2.4 To what extent did national government counterparts and partners use the data and evidence generated by OOSCI studies to develop new policies? What is the implementation status of those policies? (Descriptive)
	2.5 Did OOSCI studies influence the inclusion of programmes/interventions for children that are out of school in education sector plans? Are those programmes accompanied by clear result frameworks and reasonable pathways to achieving the intended results? (Descriptive and normative)
	2.6 Did OOSCI studies generate recommendations that address the key barriers/issues? Were there deliberate processes to ensure country ownership of the recommendations, and were the recommendations actionable? (Descriptive and normative)
	2.7 Did OOSCI studies and activities make any identifiable contribution to the reduction in the number of out-of-school children in partner countries? (Normative)

Sustainability	3.1 Did OOSCI result in improvements in administrative data collection systems (e.g., to use techniques such as geographic information systems mapping) to collect subnational data and student level data)? (Descriptive) 3.2 Did OOSCI result in greater integration and/or collaboration between the different sectors and line ministries to address issues of out-of-school children? (Descriptive) 3.3 To what extent has OOSCI strengthened capacities of national counterparts and partners to generate reports interpret and use the data for programming and decision-making? (Normative) 3.4 To what extent has OOSCI strengthened capacities of UNICEF education staff to influence policy dialogue and to carry out effective advocacy with partners and other stakeholders, including senior government officials? (Normative) 3.5 To what extent has advocacy around OOSCI work resulted in international commitments and actions to address the problem of out-of-school children?

Annex II

Prevalence of barriers that keep children from participating in schooling (percentage)



Annex III

Formative evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative

Due to space limitations, the text of the independent report entitled "Formative evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative" is not contained within the present annex. The report (168 pages) and a summary are available from the UNICEF Evaluation Office website: www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_102939.html.

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Management response to the formative evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative

Summary

The formative evaluation of the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) provides an assessment of progress towards the overall goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children who are out of school. The evaluation was conducted in a proficient and methodical manner. Evidence was gathered from a desk-based review, an online survey, interviews and focus group discussions as well as field visits to seven countries. While the evaluation could not reflect lessons from all of the more than 90 countries engaged in OOSCI, in general the evaluation provides a balanced and properly justified analysis together with a sound set of recommendations.

The evaluation confirms that OOSCI has delivered tangible outputs and has proven its relevance, effectiveness and utility, although heightened awareness at the national and international levels of out-of-school children has not been matched by the allocation of adequate resources on a sustainable basis. UNICEF management recognizes that a robust response to the recommendations of the evaluation offers the opportunity to build on the successes of OOSCI to increase the number of children able to realize their right to education.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation will be used to refine the OOSCI theory of change for all levels of basic education, maintaining a focus on pre-primary education; expand the scope of the initiative to include adolescents of upper-secondary school age as well as non-formal forms of education; strengthen the focus on implementation; build partnerships between Governments, donors and non-governmental organizations to support the translation of policies into practice; and put in place monitoring arrangements to enable a summative evaluation of the initiative in the future. By conducting these modifications in consultation with both regional and country offices, it is expected that the process will help to build the capacity of

* E/ICEF/2019/1.
Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.

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UNICEF staff, while improving results and overall programming.

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section II.

I. Key evaluation recommendations and UNICEF management response

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage:* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Evaluation recommendation 1 The theory of change for the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) should be revised to reflect the key elements of inclusion to ensure that the needs of all out-of-school children are met at all levels of the basic education cycle, while ensuring that the initiative focuses on identifying strategies and policies that empower Governments to eliminate the lack of participation at the pre-primary level, such as sustainable, pro-poor financing for the subsector. **Management response: Agree** UNICEF agrees to revise the theory of change for OOSCI to incorporate all levels of education from pre-primary to upper secondary as well as the financing implications of interventions for out-of-school children, while still maintaining a special emphasis on the crucial early years of education. An expert group consisting of staff from UNICEF headquarters and regional and country offices as well as such partners such as the Global Partnership for Education, the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) will be established to revise the theory of change and create new tools and methodologies for developing profiles of out-of-school children.				
Action 1.1 Establish an expert group, including headquarters, regional and country offices and partners, such as the Global Partnership for Education, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and ILO, to revise the OOSCI theory of change and develop new tools and guidance.	Headquarters	December 2018	Under way Members of the expert group have been identified. Terms of reference, including a revision of the theory of change and the development of new tools and guidance, have been drafted.	Terms of reference for expert group
Action 1.2 Revise OOSCI theory of change	Headquarters, in collaboration with regional offices and external partners	March 2019	Not started The revised theory of change will be included in a guidance note that will be circulated to OOSCI partners and uploaded to the OOSCI website (allinschool.org).	Guidance note

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Evaluation recommendation 2 OOSCI should expand its focus to harness the expertise and capabilities of OOSCI technical partners to seek effective and efficient strategies and solutions that support the implementation and comprehensive monitoring of policies in key contexts in which programming for different profiles of out-of-school children occurs and to attract resources to assure the sustainability of implementation. **Management response: Agree** UNICEF management agrees that OOSCI should focus on strategies to support policy implementation and monitoring and UNICEF will engage technical partners in this work. Once the theory of change has been revised, the expert group will develop and circulate new operational guidance for conducting OOSCI country studies, including on strengthening links with such existing processes as the development of education sector plans and on attracting sustainable financing, particularly from domestic resources, for strategies that meet the needs of out-of-school children.				
Action 2.1 The expert group will develop and circulate new operational guidance that includes strategies to support policy implementation and monitoring.	Headquarters, in collaboration with regional offices and external partners	March 2019	Not started A guidance note will be circulated to OOSCI partners and uploaded to allinschool.org.	Guidance note
Action 2.2 Develop and share documents on good practice in policy and programming from OOSCI country reports.	Headquarters	July 2019	Not started Notes on good practice will be circulated to OOSCI partners and uploaded to allinschool.org.	Notes on good practice
Action 2.3 Develop a technical support system to maintain up-to-date data on out-of-school children from recent household surveys.	Headquarters	March 2019	Under way Conceptual framework and implementation approach are in development.	Multiple indicator cluster survey-education analysis for global equity and learning country report
Evaluation recommendation 3 The methodological framework for OOSCI should be reoriented towards the entire basic education cycle (i.e., pre-primary through upper secondary) and target key vulnerable groups that cut across all profiles of out-of-school children. It should generate explicit strategies that address the learning needs of these groups, including but not limited to embracing appropriate forms of learning for them and responsive modalities for delivering those learning opportunities.				

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage:* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Management response: Agree UNICEF agrees that the OOSCI methodological framework should be expanded to include adolescents of upper-secondary school age and other forms of education outside formal schooling, such as alternative and flexible education programmes. The expert group will develop the tools to create statistical profiles of adolescents who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and guidance on incorporating non-formal education in the OOSCI analysis.				
Action 3.1 The expert group will develop and circulate tools to create statistical profiles of NEET adolescents.	Headquarters, in collaboration with regional offices and external partners	July 2019	Not started Tools to create statistical profiles of NEET adolescents will be included in the revised OOSCI Operational Manual.	Revised OOSCI Operational Manual
Action 3.2 The expert group will develop and circulate guidelines on incorporating non-formal education, different forms of learning and responsive modalities in the OOSCI analysis.	Headquarters, in collaboration with regional offices and external partners	March 2019	Not started The guidelines will be included in a guidance note that will be circulated to OOSCI partners and uploaded to allinschool.org.	Guidance note
Action 3.3 Develop a training course on inclusive education sector planning for children with disabilities, who constitute one of the most marginalized groups of out-of-school children.	Headquarters, in collaboration with regional offices and partners, including the UNESCO-International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the World Bank, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great	September 2019	Under way The course is being designed based on a preparatory round table on inclusive education involving eight country delegations, held with UNESCO-IIEP in July 2018, and a capacity-building workshop on inclusive education in Africa involving 12 country delegations, held with the World Bank and USAID in October 2018.	Report from inclusive education planning round table with UNESCO-IIEP and report from capacity-building workshop with the World Bank and USAID.

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation status* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
	Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)			
Evaluation recommendation 4 While maintaining the usual focus on supporting Governments to discharge their mandate to extend learning opportunities to all children, OOSCI should facilitate processes for assembling the right type of partners, including but not limited to government officials, that have a clear potential to bring new ideas and/or offer new entry points for programming for out-of-school children. **Management response: Agree** UNICEF agrees that it is essential to continue to build coalitions and partnerships to respond to emerging issues and changing situations, including greater engagement by civil society, multilateral and bilateral agencies, religious organizations, the private sector and non-traditional donors. UNICEF (Education Section) will commission research and issue briefs on engaging with other service providers, including low-cost private schools and Quranic schools, and encourage country offices to promote the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders in local education groups that advise partner Governments and advocate for specific groups of marginalized children.				
Action 4.1 The Programme Division (Education Section) will commission further research and issues briefs on engaging with other service providers, including low-fee private schools (LFPS) and Quranic schools.	Headquarters	July 2019	Under way A research project to review low-fee private schools was completed in February 2018.	Project report "Analysis of low-fee private schools in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, East Asia and Latin America and recommendations"
Action 4.2 The Programme Division (Education Section) will lead the development and publication of an overall analysis of the data and lessons learned from OOSCI country studies, with support from the Data, Research and Policy Division.	Headquarters	March 2019	Not started An analysis of OOSCI country studies will be circulated and uploaded to allinschool.org.	Analysis of OOSCI country studies

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage:* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Action 4.3 The expert group will circulate guidance to country offices to continue to promote the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders in local education groups that advise partner Governments and advocate for specific groups of marginalized children.	Headquarters, in collaboration with regional offices and external partners	March 2019	Not started Guidance to country offices on promoting the inclusion of civil society and other stakeholders will be included in a guidance note circulated to OOSCI partners and uploaded to allinschool.org.	Guidance note
Evaluation recommendation 5 OOSCI should strengthen all its programmatic elements to set up the initiative to yield evaluable information on the stated goal of achieving a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of out-of-school children. This includes ascertaining the internal and external coherence of the initiative and the feasibility of achieving the intended results and ensuring that adequate monitoring and evaluation inputs and systems are put in place to enable systematic assessments of the OOSCI contribution. **Management response: Agree** While the formative evaluation has demonstrated that OOSCI has made a valuable contribution to efforts to reduce the number of children who are out of school, UNICEF agrees that the expert group should establish indicators and monitoring arrangements to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that will enable the progress of the initiative to be systematically assessed in both humanitarian and development contexts in the future.				
Action 5.1 The expert group will develop indicators of achievement for OOSCI in humanitarian and development contexts as well as means to assess the internal and external coherence, and will circulate guidance on monitoring the initiative in partner countries.	Headquarters, in collaboration with regional offices and external partners	March 2019	Not started Guidance to country offices on indicators of achievement will be circulated and uploaded to allinschool.org.	Guidance note on monitoring OOSCI
Action 5.2 Revise the OOSC Operational Manual to include a template for country-level monitoring frameworks in relation to policy recommendations.	Headquarters	July 2019	Not started A revised OOSCI Operational Manual will be circulated to OOSCI partners and uploaded to allinschool.org.	Revised OOSCI Operational Manual

Action	*Responsible section(s)*	*Expected completion date*	*Actions taken and implementation stage* *Not started* *Under way* *Completed* *Cancelled*	*Supporting documents*
Action 5.3 Extend the existing UNICEF database on out-of-school children to cover both upper-secondary education and at-risk students in lower- and upper-secondary education for national, regional and global monitoring.	Headquarters	March 2019	Not started A data analysis consultant will be hired to extend the database and produce OOSC fact sheets.	

II. Draft decision

The Executive Board

Takes note of the following documents presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2019:

(a) Formative evaluation of the Out-Of-School Children Initiative, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/3) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/4);

(b) Independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/5) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/6).

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Independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

Executive summary***

Summary

In March 2018, the Executive Director of UNICEF requested the Evaluation Office to undertake an independent review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). The objectives of the independent review were to examine what is working as well as areas that need improvement, identify ways of deepening management accountability and improve the organization's policies, systems, and responses, as well as its culture. The Evaluation Office established an independent panel of experts for this purpose. The resulting report reflects the views of the independent panel following key interviews, field visits and a document review.

The report recommends 32 action points across the four pillars of the 2012 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA: management and coordination, community engagement, prevention and response. One of the overall messages of the panel is that UNICEF needs a whole-of-organisation strategy and an action plan for PSEA. The strategy and action plan must take into account five conditions for UNICEF to fundamentally improve PSEA: accountability, leadership, organizational culture, coherence (within UNICEF and system-wide in the United Nations), and the connected impact of these conditions on the ground. The panel finds that while elements of these conditions exist they are not yet sufficient, at scale, or strong enough to constitute a fully effective system for PSEA.

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section IV.

* E/ICEF/2019/1.

** The review and its executive summary were prepared by an independent panel and therefore do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF. In order to retain the independence of the text, it was edited by the panel and not by UNICEF.

*** The executive summary of the panel review is being circulated in all official languages. The full report is available in English from the UNICEF Evaluation Office website (see annex).

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I. Executive Summary

1. Following mounting concerns over the UN's handling of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, the incoming Executive Director of UNICEF requested the Evaluation Office to establish an Independent Panel of Experts in late May 2018 to undertake a Review of UNICEF's approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). The Members of the Panel are Yasmin Sooka, Kathleen Cravero and Susanne Frueh.[1] The Independent Panel built on research work undertaken by an earlier team of consultants between March and May 2018.

2. This independent review on PSEA needs to be put in the context of two parallel, relevant reviews that were commissioned during this period: (1) a review by a law firm of how UNICEF has investigated sexual harassment in the last five years was launched in February 2018 and completed its work by August 2018; (2) an Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender Discrimination and Harassment at UNICEF launched in June 2018 and is due to complete its work by February 2019.

3. This report reflects the view of an independent expert panel formed following key interviews, field visits and document review. It is not an evaluation. At the core of the review is the need to assess what UNICEF has put in place for PSEA and to what extent this is known, applied and funded, and to ask how could UNICEF improve on this to ensure that what is in place is applied or to improve what is in place if it is not up to standard?

4. The lens applied by the Panel to its work reflected five necessary conditions for effective PSEA; Accountability, Leadership, Organisational Culture, Coherence (within UNICEF and UN system-wide), and Connected Impact of these conditions on the ground. The report is structured across four pillars of management and coordination, community engagement, prevention and response in line with the 2012 IASC Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA.

5. Within this frame, this review examines all five areas of UNICEF's work on PSEA:

(a) Reporting mechanisms;

(b) Victim assistance;

(c) Investigation and accountability and governance;

(d) Capacity strengthening and coordination; and

(e) Prevention including safeguarding.

6. The Panel considers UNICEF to have a unique role in the UN system as advocate for the protection of children's rights, guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is particularly important that, as an organisation protecting and helping children and adolescents, that UNICEF have relevant policies and mechanisms against SEA in place. The Panel agrees that UNICEF alone cannot ensure protection from SEA; it is a system-wide responsibility. Effective PSEA is about the wider UN System, and indeed the still wider international humanitarian, development and peace support communities of aid and assistance. The Panel encourages the potential for UNICEF to be more strategic in bringing its unique role to ensuring that system-wide PSEA policies, practices, and processes are child-friendly and treat children appropriately as rights-holders.

7. The Panel feels the time for more action is overdue and that the UN has caught itself up in an over-emphasis on structures and guidance and a lack of focus on making

[1] The Panel was supported in its work by a senior consultant, Eleanor O'Gorman.

them work better. This report is one in a series of existing, planned or ongoing reviews related to SEA and need to be taken together to learn practical lessons for more accountability and action.

II. Summary Key Findings

8. The Panel sets out Key Findings under each of the 4 core chapters and provides 32 Action Points across the report responding to these. In summary these address the following:

A. Management and Coordination of PSEA

(a) The IASC PSEA Minimum Operating Standards (2012) need to be updated to operate more fully as a system-wide accountability and benchmarking framework.

(b) Too many separate policy and guidance papers signal the lack of a coherent 'whole of organisation' strategy for UNICEF on PSEA; there is an information overload and strategic deficit on PSEA, and need for support on operational implementation.

(c) Need to establish a systemic (whole of organisation) approach, upgraded leadership structure, and sustained resources for PSEA.

(d) Need for enhanced UN coherence on PSEA to help system work together better.

B. Community Engagement

(a) A paradigm shift is needed in treating communities and victims as rights-holders rather than labelling them as beneficiaries.

(b) Need for fuller engagement with communities at earlier points for prevention and to consider this beyond humanitarian settings only.

(c) Community Based Complaints Mechanisms (CBCMs) are a necessity in high risk countries and need to be fully tested, as part of the overall need to establish One UN reporting systems at country level in all settings.

C. Prevention

(a) A need to move beyond fragmented compliance measures and build a more systemic approach to preventing SEA that includes more active promotion of deterrence.

(b) Organisational culture is the enabling environment of PSEA and needs a long-term perspective with ongoing proactive measures and tracking of change; this includes promoting a 'speak out' culture.

(c) The transfer of money to implementing partners does not transfer the risks of SEA.

(d) PSEA is not yet embedded in risk management at headquarters and field level.

D. Response

(a) Chronic under-reporting is a systemic concern and stumbling block to accountability and prevention of SEA.

(b) The approach, management and outcomes of investigations involving SEA need significant improvement and coherence.

(c) Victim Assistance needs to be urgently reviewed with a right-based lens to clarify support to victims, as well as UNICEF roles, responsibilities and resources in the context of system-wide accountability.

III. Key Messages and Way Forward

9. The core message of the Panel is that UNICEF needs a whole of organisation strategy and an action plan for PSEA. Both of these must reflect the five necessary conditions required for UNICEF to improve fundamentally the prevention of SEA: Accountability, Leadership, Organisational Culture, Coherence (within UNICEF and UN system-wide), and Connected Impact of these conditions on the ground.

10. The panel finds that while elements of these conditions exist they are not yet sufficient, at scale, or strong enough to constitute a fully effective system for PSEA.

11. Accountability must be at the heart of such a system. This requires a paradigm shift in how UNICEF engages with SEA along the following lines.

(a) The individuals and communities with which UNICEF works must be viewed as rights-holders rather than beneficiaries. UNICEF is a duty-bearer in relation to these rights.

(b) *Ad hoc* fragmented actions across the many levels of UNICEF must be replaced by a clear and compelling whole of organisation strategy.

(c) PSEA must be seen as a management responsibility rather than the extension of child protection or GBV programmes.

(d) The emphasis must move from a maze of policy documents on PSEA to operational reality. UNICEF staff need practical, user-friendly guidance on PSEA. They need to understand their accountability as duty-bearers towards children and the communities in which children live.

(e) PSEA must be seen as relevant in all UNICEF operations, not only in humanitarian settings. UNICEF must be pro-active in identifying and managing PSEA risks, not only responding to crisis. The root causes of and risks for SEA must be identified in all contexts, across all programme areas and in every setting that UNICEF works.

(f) Implementing partners should be seen as potential allies in PSEA and, as such, given support, guidance and resources to ensure PSEA within their operations. While implementing partners must be held accountable in this regard, UNICEF cannot transfer its own risk and responsibilities to these partners.

(g) A culture must be created that rewards speaking up on PSEA, eliminates fear of retribution and inspires confidence that the "system works".

(h) Deterrence contributes to the prevention of SEA and reinforces the presence of accountability. To this end, consequences for SEA need to be communicated and backed up by credible sanctions.

(i) UNICEF must embrace its role as lead advocate for children's rights and needs in all system-wide policies, mechanisms and actions on the ground.

(j) SEA and preventing it, are not problems for UNICEF alone. They are system-wide issues and thus require system-wide accountability and action. UNICEF cannot and should not allow the rest of the system to abdicate its responsibility for prevention or for victim assistance. It has two key and reinforcing roles: push the system to do more and better to prevent SEA; and ensure that whatever system-wide action is taken has the rights and needs of children at its center.

12. The Panel concludes that the Action Points set out in this report need to be implemented, guided by the strategic following directions.

(a) Continue the persistent tone at the top aiming at culture change at all levels through various means — including ensuring the centrality of accountability in all of UNICEF's actions on PSEA.

(b) Shift the focus on reporting, policy development and guidance materials to prevention and ensuring accountability both at global and country level.

(c) Develop a concise, strategic, three-year whole-of-organisation strategy, accompanied by a theory of change and an accountability framework.

(d) Develop a clear communications approach to PSEA that is adaptable to the country-specific context.

(e) Using a risk-based approach, provide support (including through additional resources) for full PSEA roll out throughout UNICEF in both humanitarian and development contexts.

(f) Put accountability at the centre of detection, investigation and sanctions for cases, as well as the treatment of victims as rights-holders at all stages of reporting, investigation, assistance and outcome.

(g) Use the chairpersonship of IASC SEA/SHA to promote inter-agency accountability and learning, pooling of resources to maximise in-country impact, rolling out of a rights-based approach to community engagement on PSEA, simplifying and centralising reporting at the country level to a single focal point responsible to the SRSG/RC/HC who in turn should be held accountable for ensuring sustainable PSEA systems.

IV. Draft decision

The Executive Board

Takes note of the following documents presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2019:

(a) Formative evaluation of the Out-Of-School Children Initiative, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/3) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/4);

(b) Independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/5) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/6).

Annex

Independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

Due to space limitations, the text of the independent report entitled "Independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse" is not contained in the present annex. The report (78 pages) is available from the UNICEF Evaluation Office website:

www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Independent_Panel_Report_UNICEF_Review_PSEA.pdf

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Management response to the independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

Summary

UNICEF aims to have the highest results for its response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). Following reports about children and women being sexually exploited and abused by members of the development community, Executive Director Fore put this issue at the top of the UNICEF agenda and renewed and increased the organization's commitment to prevent these violations — no matter who commits them — and to support victims/survivors in any way possible. In February 2018, the Executive Director requested the Evaluation Office to establish an independent panel of experts to undertake a review of the UNICEF response to PSEA, focusing on management accountability, policies and systems, incident response effectiveness and organizational culture.[a]

The Evaluation Office consulted UNICEF management on the terms of reference of the present review of the UNICEF response to PSEA, including its objectives and scope, which management endorsed. UNICEF management also had the opportunity to exchange views with the panel during and after the review, therefore deepening the organization's understanding of the findings and actions to improve the UNICEF response. UNICEF is extremely grateful to the panel and the Evaluation Office for these exchanges and for the panel's report. UNICEF supports the panel's key messages below and agrees to all recommended action points.

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section III.

[a] In parallel, UNICEF commissioned two other independent reviews: the first, in February 2018, to review how UNICEF has investigated workplace sexual harassment in the last five years; and the second, in June 2018, on workplace gender discrimination and harassment. The first of these reviews was completed in August 2018 and the second is ongoing.

* E/ICEF/2019/1.

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I. Key messages

Key messages	*Action point(s)*
The individuals and communities with which UNICEF works must be viewed as rights-holders rather than beneficiaries. UNICEF is a duty bearer in relation to these rights.	10, 12 and 24
Ad hoc fragmented actions across the many levels of UNICEF must be replaced by a clear and compelling whole of organization strategy.	2, 6 and 7
PSEA must be seen as a management responsibility rather than the extension of child protection or gender-based violence programmes.	5, 6, 7, 13, 17 and 24
The emphasis must move from a maze of policy documents on PSEA to operational reality. UNICEF staff need practical, user-friendly guidance on PSEA. They need to understand their accountability as duty-bearers towards children and the communities in which children live.	4, 7, 9 and 10
PSEA must be seen as relevant in all UNICEF operations, not only in humanitarian settings. UNICEF must be pro-active in identifying and managing PSEA risks, not only responding to crisis. The root causes of and risks for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) must be identified in all contexts, across all programme areas and in every setting that UNICEF works.	11 and 19
Implementing partners should be seen as potential allies in PSEA and, as such be given support, guidance and resources to ensure PSEA within their operations. While implementing partners must be held accountable in this regard, UNICEF cannot transfer its own risk and responsibilities to these partners.	4, 8, 9, 14, 18 and 21
A culture must be created that rewards speaking up on PSEA, eliminating fear of retribution and inspiring confidence that the system works.	5, 16, 17, 20 and 21
Deterrence contributes to prevention of SEA and reinforces the presence of accountability. To this end, consequences for SEA need to be communicated and backed up by credible sanctions.	13, 14 and 23
UNICEF must embrace its role as lead advocate for children's rights and needs in all system-wide policies, mechanisms and actions on the ground.	1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 14, 15, 22, 24 and 25
SEA and PSEA are not problems for UNICEF alone. They are system-wide issues and thus require system-wide accountability and action. UNICEF cannot and should not allow the rest of the system to abdicate its responsibility for prevention or for victim assistance. It has two key and reinforcing roles: push the system to do more and better to prevent SEA; and ensure that whatever system-wide action is taken has the rights and needs of children at its centre.	1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 22, 24 and 25

II. Detailed management response

Issue	*Recommended Action Point*	*Management Response*	*Expected Completion Date*	*UNICEF comments*[1]
1. Need to update 2012 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Minimum Operating Standards[2]	The Executive Director in her new role as the IASC Principals' Champion on SEA and sexual harassment and abuse (SHA) lead a time-limited, focused updating of the 2012 Minimum Operating Standards (MOS) to reflect the central obligation of accountability, and make the MOS more fit for purpose in terms of the ambition of scope for PSEA actions and intended impact. It could then better function as an accountability framework to benchmark the humanitarian system.	Agree (in progress)	June 2019	The Executive Director as IASC Champion will lead the IASC PSEA Senior Focal Points in updating the 2012 PSEA Minimum Operating Standards, including key benchmarks for its operationalization.
2. Coherent whole of organization strategy on PSEA	UNICEF consolidate a more strategic framework on PSEA with specific objectives and aims that is no more than 10 pages. It would also set out explicit operational understandings of what constitutes SEA, zero tolerance, and the principles for action by UNICEF. This would be the guiding document for the whole of UNICEF and be coordinated and overseen by a dedicated leadership structure on PSEA. This updated strategy would be accompanied by a theory of change to be implemented through a phased action plan for the next three years starting with year one; this would seek to focus, prioritize and track the strategic and operational direction and impact of an enhanced whole of organization PSEA system.	Agree (not started)	December 2018	The Office of the Executive Director will assemble a multi-disciplinary team to develop this strategic framework. The team will be led by DED Management and will be comprised of the Division of Human Resources (DHR), Ethics Office, Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), Division of Communication (DOC), Field Results Group (FRG), Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP), Public Partnerships Division (PPD), Child Protection Section, Child Safeguarding Unit, Staff Association, and regional and country office level staff.

[1] The majority of the supporting documents listed in this column are internal UNICEF documents.
[2] https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/3_minimum_operating_standards_mos-psea.pdf

Issue	Recommended Action Point	Management Response	Expected Completion Date	UNICEF comments[1]
				The strategy will draw from recommendations made by this report, the independent review on investigations report, the report from the Independent Task Force on workplace gender discrimination and harassment, and similar strategies existing in the United Nations system. Once the strategy is ready, its implementation will be included in the workplan of the Senior PSEA Coordinator for coordination and oversight, who will periodically report to the Executive Director on progress. The strategy and implementation results will also be presented to the UNICEF Executive Board as part of the mandated annual discussion of SEA/SHA.
3. Reinforce understanding of SEA	Prohibitions on sex with beneficiaries and transactional sex need to be clarified, strengthened, reinforced and advocated both within UNICEF and at inter-agency level.	Agree (in progress)	July 2019	The Executive Director as IASC Champion is leading inter-agency efforts to gain consensus on and document the UNICEF position on sex with adult members of the crisis-affected/host community to inform the revision of the fourth of the IASC six core principles relating to SEA.[3] The

[3] www.interaction.org/courses/managing-sea/data/downloads/iascsixcoreprinciples.pdf

UNICEF position is that the fourth principle should prohibit sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries rather than strongly discourage them. At the 2 November meeting of IASC PSEA Senior Focal Points it was agreed to set up a sub-group to review the principle and clarify the following terms: beneficiaries and humanitarian workers.

Within UNICEF, DED Management is leading the development of the UNICEF implementation proposal for both the fourth IASC core principle and a similar prohibition in the revision of Secretary-General's Bulletin "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13). (The bulletin's revision is led by the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (hereafter referred to as the Special Coordinator)).

4. Support in implementation of guidance and policies	(a) Increase hands-on, people-centered support for learning and capacity-building for PSEA by UNICEF and IASC at the operational level to translate and apply guidance. This should be considered in the updated strategy and workplan for PSEA by UNICEF and in consultation with a range of country and regional offices regarding needs and gaps.	Agree (in progress)	March 2019	For the last two years, the Executive Director has prioritized hand-on support and capacity-building for PSEA to regional and country offices, allocating substantial human and financial resources ($2.2 million for 2016–2017 for headquarters/2 regional offices/8 country offices; $11 million for 2018–2019 to headquarters/3 regional offices/16 country offices) for this purpose. The UNICEF Child Protection Section, with support of Field Results Group and Regional and Country Offices, has launched a PSEA SharePoint site to consolidate technical guidance to country offices. An orientation presentation on PSEA, translated in various languages, is being used with country offices. Training using available materials has already been initiated by an estimated 25 per cent of country offices since July 2018. The UNICEF Child Protection Section is also developing a PSEA toolkit and training for staff and partners that will provide comprehensive guidance and operational resources to

			strengthen PSEA, working with implementing partners in the field. FRG, the Civil Society Partnerships Unit/DOC and the Child Protection Section carried out two PSEA webinars and led presentations or held bilateral meetings on an additional 8–10 occasions to strengthen collaboration with UNICEF civil society organizations (CSO) partners.
(b) The Executive Director request the IASC Task Team to develop a system-wide plan for such support with targeted actions and resources.	Agree (in progress)	July 2019	On 24 September 2018, the Executive Director issued a letter to IASC Principals outlining system-wide priorities on PSEA. The Executive Director shared a proposal for accelerating implementation of PSEA at country level with the IASC Senior Focal Points, which will be finalized by a task team in advance of the 3 December IASC Principals meeting. At that meeting the final proposal will be endorsed and IASC members are expected to pledge commitments for full implementation by July 2019.

				The Executive Director is moving forward a proposal for an IASC PSEA Technical Field Support to provide inter-agency operational support to country offices. The Child Protection Section, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the IASC PSEA Task Team is developing a PSEA training package with additional specialized modules that provide detailed guidance for PSEA interventions.
5. Focused communications	UNICEF to develop a dedicated and tailored communications approach (internal and external) as part of the work of any new/upgraded leadership and coordination position/team for PSEA. It needs to also take account of the various contexts in which UNICEF operates and support country offices and staff with PSEA communications in those contexts.	Agree (not started)	February 2019	UNICEF is recruiting a Senior PSEA Coordinator in the Office of the Executive Director. Financial resources have already been allocated to the Senior Coordinator to achieve results. The Senior PSEA Coordinator will work with the Director, DOC and a multi-disciplinary team to develop monthly reports and the communications strategy for PSEA.
6. Management accountability	UNICEF establish a clear distinction and separation of organizational leadership and management of PSEA from programme-based responses.	Agree (not started)	March 2019	The Office of the Executive Director will assemble a multi-disciplinary team to develop the whole of the UNICEF PSEA accountability framework, as part of the coherent strategic

				framework mentioned in action point 2. The team will be led by DED Management and will be comprised of DHR, the Ethics Office, the Office of the Ombudsman, OIAI, DOC, FRG, PFP, PPD, Child Protection Section, Child Safeguarding Unit, Staff Association, and regional and country office level staff.
7. UNICEF PSEA management structure	UNICEF establish a dedicated senior leadership/coordination PSEA position with supporting team to coordinate, guide and support UNICEF in shifting to a whole of organization, systemic approach to SEA. This dedicated leadership, capacity and resourcing is required to help UNICEF make the paradigm shift it needs to bring strategic lift to the range of PSEA initiatives, tools, policies, actions, and relationships across the various parts of the organization and in the engagement of UNICEF with the wider United Nations system on PSEA.	Agree (in progress)	January 2019	UNICEF is recruiting a Senior PSEA Coordinator in the Office of the Executive Director. Financial resources have already been allocated to the Senior Coordinator to achieve results. The Senior PSEA Coordinator will work with a multi-disciplinary team to develop the strategy and whole of organization approach to PSEA. The team will be comprised of DHR, the Ethics Office, Child Protection Section, Child Safeguarding Unit, Staff Association, Office of the Ombudsman, OIAI, DOC, PFP, PPD and regional and country office level staff.
8. Dedicate resources to PSEA	UNICEF and the system-wide United Nations at inter-agency level should significantly increase investment to underpin the pooling efforts and funding that are required for an effective system of PSEA at United Nations	Agree (in progress)	December 2018	On 24 September 2018, the Executive Director, as IASC Champion, sent a letter to IASC Principals with a request to jointly put in

	level, whilst ensuring agency-level capacity to implement PSEA throughout the organization and operations of UNICEF.			place a package of PSEA interventions and structures in target countries. The aim is to systematize PSEA in countries with humanitarian response plans, refugee response plans, or joint response plans (34 countries in 2018). The Executive Director has allocated $11 million of internal set aside funding to 16 country offices/3 regional offices for 2018–2020. UNICEF has also received an additional $1.2 million in grants for PSEA.
9. Enhance United Nations coherence on PSEA	(a) The Executive Director in her new role as IASC Principals' Champion on SEA and SHA initiate joint meetings to share collective United Nations initiatives on PSEA with a view to streamlining efforts and strengthening the coherence and impact of various forums and workstreams on PSEA.	Agree (ongoing)	Ongoing	The Executive Director as IASC Champion on SEA and SHA will connect PSEA work at the United Nations and the broader IASC at high-level IASC meetings, quarterly through June 2019. There will be standing invitations for key United Nations representatives at IASC meetings, and vice-versa. At the technical level, coordination between IASC and United Nations groups is established through the IASC PSEA Task Team Coordinator. On 30 August 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human

			Rights, the Department of Field Support, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF presented the United Nations work to the IASC. The UNICEF PSEA Focal Point will provide technical-level updates to the IASC about the United Nations PSEA work in bi-monthly calls.
(b) UNICEF arrange a joint meeting of the reviews commissioned this year related to SEA and SHA to optimize learning and cross-fertilization of analysis and recommendations. Such critical engagement is needed as an ongoing part of building PSEA into UNICEF leadership, operations, culture and engagement with communities.	Agree (not started)	March 2019	The Office of the Executive Director will convene a learning and cross-fertilization meeting at the end of the first quarter of 2019, by which time the report of the UNICEF Independent Task Force on workplace gender discrimination and harassment will also be available. By April 2019, the outcome/conclusions of that meeting should then flow into the learning agenda, which is jointly owned by DHR and the Division of Data, Research and Policy.
(c) The Executive Director in her capacity as the chair of the IASC Task Force on SEA and SHA calls for a system-wide learning event to bring together the various reviews currently being undertaken by IASC members, with a focus on cultural change and accountability.	Agree (in progress)	March 2019	The Executive Director as IASC Champion supports the IASC in convening an annual global meeting of IASC members to strengthen PSEA, promote accountability and culture change across the

				humanitarian system, including a learning event for culture change and accountability for United Nations/international non-governmental organizations (INGO)/ national non-governmental organizations (NNGO). Accordingly, in September 2018, UNICEF and the IASC accountability to affected populations (AAP) and PSEA Task Team Coordinator, together with IOM and other key actors in the Task Team agreed to convene a CSO meeting on PSEA to strengthen system-wide learning. The meeting is planned for the first quarter in 2019.
10. Treating communities and victims as rights-holders	The panel strongly suggests that UNICEF adopt a rights-based approach to community engagement on SEA linked to prevention and accountability that underpins any updated, simplified UNICEF strategy for PSEA.	Agree (ongoing)	March 2019	The Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) will articulate a survivor-centered rights-based approach to community engagement in a four-page document, which will support the UNICEF strategy for PSEA. The Child Protection Section has rolled-out the PSEA results monitoring framework for country offices, which includes key actions to promote the rights of SEA survivors and vulnerable communities, starting with the PSEA

				results monitoring framework. A webinar was held on 18 October 2018 to discuss the draft framework with country and regional office staff.
11. Community empowerment	UNICEF set up a working group to apply its community engagement empowerment strengths to working in a more systematic way on prevention of and accountability for SEA with communities in high-risk areas of SEA, as well as development contexts. This could be reflected in an updated strategy and action plan on PSEA and coordinated by an upgraded leadership structure for PSEA.	Agree (in progress)	June 2019	The Executive Director as IASC Champion will lead the IASC PSEA Senior Focal Points in updating the 2012 PSEA Minimum Operating Standards including key benchmarks for their operationalization by June 2019. Part of this work will be to elaborate systematic ways of working on prevention of and accountability for SEA with communities in high-risk areas of SEA, building on innovations in humanitarian and development contexts and building in a process for lessons learned. The targeted countries in the Executive Director's IASC proposal (letter dated 24 September 2018 by the Executive Director to IASC Principals with a request to jointly put in place a package of PSEA interventions and structures in target countries) will be requested to report back on results and lessons learned, contributing to a repository of promising practice for PSEA.

				The Child Protection Section actively contributes to the IASC AAP/ PSEA Task Team, which includes a focus on how to strengthen the operational linkages between AAP and PSEA. UNICEF technical specialists on PSEA, AAP and Communication for Development (C4D) are working closely to support a coherent response in several countries, including most recently in Bangladesh, the Central African Republic and Nigeria. This action will be included for monitoring in the workplan of the Senior PSEA Coordinator currently under recruitment.
12. Coherent country level accountability mechanism	UNICEF, as part of its inter-agency leadership and participation in IASC, press for accelerated roll-out, sustained training and support, and real-time learning and adaptation of community-based complaint mechanisms (CBCM) and associated PSEA networks in humanitarian contexts, so that challenges and improvements can be addressed in terms of reporting and case follow-up. Also, that UNICEF pay attention to the rights of the child in the setting up and operation of such mechanisms.	Agree (ongoing)	July 2019	The Executive Director as IASC Champion has prioritized the scale-up of CBCMs in her IASC proposal for accelerating implementation of PSEA in countries with humanitarian response and other plans. The CBCMs are to be safe and accessible, for effective reporting, and connected to appropriate services, for assistance or redress.

				UNICEF country offices will support the expansion of CBCMs in 16 of the targeted countries of the Executive Director's IASC proposal, and collaborate with other agencies in the remaining targeted countries. In 2017, UNICEF supported CBCM trainings in seven countries, in collaboration with IOM, under the IASC AAP/PSEA Task Team. In 2018, UNICEF supported three regional CBCM training of trainers, in collaboration with IOM, under the IASC AAP/PSEA Task Team. UNICEF is working with the IASC to update the Task Team website to strengthen country, regional and global-level learning and knowledge sharing, including on CBCM roll-outs.
13. Systemic approach to prevention	UNICEF adopt a more systemic and connected approach to prevention with elements of organizational culture, risk management, deterrence, operational support to staff and partners, and community engagement. This could be reflected in an updated PSEA strategy and action plan.	Agree (not started)	Ongoing for completion by January 2019	By January 2019, the updated PSEA strategy and action plan will focus on the development of tools for connecting systemic prevention efforts across the areas identified. This will be a key element of the workplan of the Senior PSEA Coordinator, currently under recruitment. PSEA awareness-raising will also continue to be driven at

				Global Management Team meetings, Regional Management Team meetings, ethics workshops and in human resources management master class and new Representative orientation sessions.
14. Promoting deterrence	(a) Stronger promotion of deterrence as part of preventing SEA, with the focus on sanctions and consequences of SEA. These need to be credible, visible, and potentially negotiated advocated within the administrative systems (UNICEF and system-wide United Nations) to ensure they work well and are used (that loopholes are closed). The reality of deterrence and sanction for SEA must be visible and seen to work.	Agree (ongoing)	Ongoing	The Executive Director will continue to promote 90-day investigation targets and appropriate sanctions for SEA within UNICEF, the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, (CEB) and IASC. To date, UNICEF sanctions of personnel and partners found to have committed SEA have been uncompromising. UNICEF is accelerating its investigative and disciplinary action. It is increasing the visibility of its investigations through more frequent internal communications. SEA sanctions will be prominently identified, and emblematic cases will be publicly communicated. The revised programme cooperation agreement terms and conditions (UNICEF standard contractual document with implementing partners) strengthened consequences for partners

			who do not invest in systems for both prevention and response in PSEA.
(b) The Executive Director engage with other heads of larger United Nations funds and programmes and with the Special Coordinator on gathering an overview of sanctions available (as well as gaps and weaknesses) to drive a collective effort to address loopholes and strengthen the actions available to the executive leadership of the United Nations to sanction and deter SEA among staff and partners.	Agree (in progress)	March 2019	The November 2018 CEB has endorsed a recommendation by the High-Level Committee on Management to form a new sub-group to look at investigative capacity and deterrence measures. UNICEF is jointly organizing a meeting convened by IASC and CEB on 26 November 2018 to strengthen standards and capacity for investigation of SEA. The Executive Director will engage with other heads of funds and programmes to gather an overview of sanctions available and existing gaps to strengthen actions available to leadership of the United Nations.
(c) the annual report of UNICEF provide more detail on cases, investigations and sanctions for SEA and provide context.	Agree (in progress)	June 2019	UNICEF has increased the frequency with which it reports to staff on investigations. UNICEF will examine what details it can add to the annual reports on investigations (UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations annual report to the Executive Board) and discipline (the Executive Director's annual disciplinary

				circular) to add confidence or deterrence value with the small number of reported cases, without compromising confidentiality.
15. Reinforcing Training	UNICEF build on the online training course and explore more integrated packages for staff development, improvement, and performance with respect to PSEA.	Agree (ongoing)	Ongoing	DHR has introduced a new module in the UNICEF management masters class[4] (MMC module) on this topic. DHR, with the Office of the Ombudsman and Ethics Office is revising the UNICEF performance management framework to capture ethics in the delivery of results more fully.
16. Enabling environment	Executive Director bring her leadership to, and take a strong stance on SEA. The panel encourages her to push through in terms of maintaining the tone from the top and backing it up with a focused plan of action for the next three years that can give UNICEF the improved and strengthened system of PSEA that it requires and deserves.	Agree (in progress)	January 2019	The Executive Director is fully committed to zero tolerance for SEA and any other forms of abuse. To support her in her efforts, she has created the posts of Senior PSEA Coordinator and Organizational Culture Adviser. The TOR for the latter will include strong change management focus, as well as galvanizing energies to combat SEA and create a culture of respect, care, trust and equality. These posts will support the Executive Director to frequently communicate through a variety of mediums to all staff on expectations, initiatives and updates on cases and

[4] https://gpseu.unicef.org/course/info.php?id=11741

				investigations. A plan of action will be developed by February 2019.
17. Speak out Culture	Executive Director outline active measures to promote an open, speak out culture on PSEA as part of the recommended updated strategy and action plan on PSEA.	Agree (in progress)	January 2019	The Executive Director has engaged the whole organization to build together a culture of respect, care, trust and equality, and delivered by prioritizing financial resources to augment human capacity and systems in child safeguarding, ethics, PSEA, culture, staff wellbeing, etc. The Senior PSEA Coordinator will work with the Director, DOC and a multi-disciplinary team to develop monthly reports to support management response to promoting a speak up culture. This action will be included for monitoring and reporting into the portfolio of the Senior PSEA Coordinator reporting to the Executive Director directly, which is under recruitment.
18. Implementing Partners	Partners need to be engaged on PSEA. This is not simply a matter of delegating risk but supporting partners and learning with partners in what is a shared challenge. There is space for such joint work within UNICEF and at level of IASC with other United Nations entities who often work with the same INGOs and CSOs, as well as major implementing partners who are part of IASC.	Agree (ongoing)	Ongoing	FRG will review its principles of partnerships to include a stronger emphasis on protection and safeguarding of the communities served. Working with the Child Protection Section, Child Safeguarding Unit, OIAI and DHR, FRG is strengthening

				its capacities at headquarters level to better communicate with partners about PSEA. UNICEF is producing internal and inter-agency training material and tools (e.g. risk assessments) to be shared with partners and coordination groups. They will include both messages on the organization's expectations of partners, and its support to and resources available for partners. The Executive Director as IASC champion will promote the IASC as a platform for exchange and learning among partners, including NGO experiences. This will include a learning event for culture change and accountability for United Nations/INGO/NNGO.
19. Risk Management	(a) PSEA be treated as a standard part of any risk analysis at project, programme, country and corporate levels.	Agree (not started)	March 2019	The Division of Financial and Administrative Management will include SEA as an identified risk category in the corporate risk register, for country and corporate risk. Additional guidance will be provided in the enterprise risk management (ERM) procedures and guidance for the annual assessment of risks, incorporating lessons learned from this and other reviews. In addition, the

				PSEA toolkit currently under development includes a risk assessment tool for programming and institutional use.
	(b) The Executive Director in her new role as IASC Principals Champion on SEA and SHA lead on practical plans for United Nations-wide SEA prevention strategies in all countries — humanitarian and non-humanitarian — and pursue this in joint efforts of IASC with the Office of the Special Coordinator.	Agree (in progress)	January 2019	In September 2018, the Executive Director as IASC Champion proposed a draft IASC PSEA Championship workplan and shared it for comments with IOM, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)/IASC and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). On this basis OCHA, UNHCR and UNICEF adopted a Championship for PSEA/SHA strategy through 2020. The IASC Chair sent the strategy to all IASC Principals on 1 November.
20. Addressing under-reporting	(a) The Executive Director and senior management actively promote and reinforce a speak up, speak out culture and actively engage in understanding the attitudes and power dynamics that drive under-reporting of both SEA and SHA.	Agree (ongoing)	Ongoing	The Office of the Executive Director has made this a standing item at every Regional, Country and Global Management Team meeting. The Senior PSEA Coordinator will work with the Director, DOC and a multi-disciplinary team to develop monthly reports to support a management response to promoting a speak up culture.

	(b) The Executive Director and senior management deploy communications and reporting tools (e.g. the annual report on disciplinary actions) to convey key consistent messages.	Agree (not started)	June 2019	DHR will review frequency, content, format and distribution/communication of the annual report on disciplinary actions in accordance with this recommendation.
21. Strengthening whistle-blower policies and practices	The revised whistle-blower policy is promoted and made operational across UNICEF and with partners, communicated easily and visibly on websites, and demonstrated that it works — that staff will come to know and hear of cases where people were protected.	Agree (ongoing)	Ongoing	This is actioned by the Ethics Office and underway to the extent possible and applicable: (a) Under the organization's revised whistle-blower policy, retaliation by UNICEF personnel against other UNICEF personnel or partners or their personnel constitutes misconduct. (b) Whistle-blower protection cases are strictly confidential, precisely to protect personnel who blow the whistle. Information can therefore only be shared in the form of statistics and overviews, as is happening already through the Ethics Office's annual report. (c) Leaving these caveats aside, the Ethics Office is already actively promoting the revised whistle-blower policy, for instance through the recent webinar on whistle-blower protection. Pocket-Guide on UNICEF Whistle-blower policy

				FAQs on Whistle-blower Protection
22. Strengthening reporting mechanism	One clear and consistent pathway for reporting SEA is established at country level and embedded in the United Nations operational and coordination set-up that is there (humanitarian, development, integrated mission).	Agree	March 2019	The Executive Director as IASC Champion will propose options for a procedure that provides for all SEA allegations to be reported to the Emergency Relief Coordinator, through the Humanitarian Coordinator, in a manner that is consistent with the reporting procedures outlined by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
23. Reinforcing Investigations	Current approach and capacities for investigations on SEA by UNICEF are upgraded and strengthened in line with the findings of this review, and the parallel SHA review, and considered a priority in the recommended plan of action for PSEA.	Agree (in progress)	December 2018	The Executive Director approved the allocation of additional resources (October 2018) to strengthen the organization's investigations capacity for urgent implementation and reduce the number of days of investigation. Two new female investigators have joined OIAI and six more staff will be added to the team (four professional investigators and two administrative staff). Contractors are also available to handle cases, as needed.

				UNICEF will be participating in an investigations conference in November 2018 addressing the sharing of best practices, and how to best ensure investigative capacity (including through specialist-pooling arrangements). This will also be considered together with the Morgan Lewis report on sexual harassment investigations and the UNICEF Independent Task Force on workplace gender discrimination and harassment's recommendations.
24. Victim assistance	(a) Consider and clarify working assumptions and potential risks of merging victim assistance (VA) into gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection (CP) programming as another project when emphasis should be on responsibility and accountability to victims as rights-holders with respect to UNICEF and the wider United Nations as duty bearers for allegations and reports of SEA.	Agree (not started)	March 2019	Survivors of SEA access services through GBV and CP programmes; these services include medical care, psychosocial support, and reintegration assistance. Survivors of SEA may require specialized safety and legal assistance beyond GBV programmes due to the perpetrators' institutional affiliations. To clarify responsibility and accountability we collaborate closely with the United Nations Victims' Rights Advocate, who is actively working on a bill of rights for SEA survivors.

			The Senior PSEA Coordinator will work with relevant divisions to clarify the intent of VA and some of the practical modalities for VA (e.g. duration of assistance, standardization of package of assistance with other organizations, VA case closure, etc.)
			Within IASC and CEB, the Executive Director will advocate for the network of legal advisers to advise on how to better align accountabilities for, respectively, criminal referral, access to justice, and payments to victims. The role and capacity of Member State law enforcement authorities will also be considered as part of this exercise, together with opportunities to provide victims with access to effective legal assistance.
(b) Consider and clarify how funding of VA in cases of SEA can be made timely, predictable and sustainable as part of core United Nations-wide organizational and operating costs and not reliant on ad hoc project and programme fundraising; how such funding will be sourced and allocated in the future and who will pay	Agree (ongoing)	Ongoing	Funding for the prevention of PSEA and SHA is an essential element of discussions with all actors including donors, and for the United Nations within the CEB and the IASC.

given current operating assumptions that UNICEF takes charge of all United Nations victims who are minors and children. These discussions should include the set aside funds of UNICEF, the new United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the core budget of the United Nations from Member States, and the payments to troop-contributing countries where peacekeepers are involved.			The Executive Director as IASC champion is advocating for the inclusion of PSEA in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, with the support of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The humanitarian response plans provide important funding mechanisms for both prevention and response. PPD and the Programme Division are working together for the mobilization of significant resource for gender-based violence in emergencies programmes, which provide services for survivors of SEA. UNICEF remains an active member of the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The Executive Director as IASC champion will propose a joint pledging event for gender-based violence in emergencies programmes and CP for system-wide mobilization.
(c) How to bridge the accountability gap in legal referral, justice and reparations that carry implications and risks in the current application of VA packages.	Agree (not started)	March 2019	Within IASC and CEB, the Executive Director will advocate for the network of legal advisers to advise on how to better align accountabilities for, respectively, criminal referral, access to justice,

			and payments to victims. The role and capacity of Member State law enforcement authorities will also be considered as part of this exercise, together with opportunities to provide victims with access to effective legal assistance.
(d) Critical learning from across UNICEF on the evolution and implementation of VA packages with view to adapting and reshaping guidance; this should include re-evaluating the standard make-up of packages, modelled on available GBV services from United Nations agencies and partners, in terms of appropriateness and effectiveness for victims; it should also address the risks of lack of clear exit strategies for time bound assistance for VA.	Agree	June 2019 (underway)	The Child Protection Section will seek to finalize the draft VA protocol for adoption at the United Nations high-level steering group meeting on 10 December 2018. Once final, the Senior PSEA Coordinator with relevant divisions will clarify the intent of VA and some of the practical modalities and guidance for VA (e.g. duration of assistance, standardization of package of assistance with other organizations, VA case closure, etc.) UNICEF will work to develop the case closure criteria within the United Nations VA protocol, based on inter-agency agreed GBV and CP case management systems.
(e) Coherence and complementarity in the evolving roles, responsibilities, and ways of working of the new Victim Rights Advocate role vis-à-vis agencies and programmes (notably UNICEF and UNFPA) with responsibilities for VA to complainants where any United Nations personnel are involved.	Agree (ongoing)	June 2019	Consultations with the Victims' Rights Advocate and the Task Team to develop the VA protocol were carried out in the first and second quarter of 2018. The Office of the Victims'

			Rights Advocate is currently carrying out a mapping exercise which will inform the protocol development and roll-out throughout 2019.
(f) Parameters for relevance, coherence and sustainability of VA in operational implementation in different settings (development settings with national systems, humanitarian crisis settings, and peacekeeping settings) need to be set out at United Nations level for clarity of roles and responsibilities of UNICEF vis-à-vis other parts of the United Nations.	Agree (ongoing)	June 2019	Upon finalization of the VA protocol by the Victims' Rights Advocate and the IASC PSEA Task Team, within the PSEA accountability framework, UNICEF will provide technical support to country offices to adapt the protocol to the local context, including development settings with national systems, humanitarian crisis settings, and peacekeeping settings. The protocol provides parameters for relevance of assistance (based on needs assessment); coherence (based on alignment with broader GBV programming); and, as part of a sustainable, systemic approach, links the provision coordination of assistance to the functions of the PSEA network, with possible support from the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

25. Engaging National Authorities in PSEA	The Executive Director, in her role as IASC Principals' Champion on SEA and SHA, table a discussion with relevant parts of the United Nations on establishing guidelines for pursuing SEA investigations cases, and victim support in contexts where referral can be made to national authorities.	Agree (not started)	December 2018	The Executive Director as IASC champion is actively advocating for the establishment of guidelines for pursuing SEA investigations cases, and victim support on how to engage national authorities in PSEA response.

III. Draft decision

The Executive Board

Takes note of the following documents presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2019:

(a) Formative evaluation of the Out-Of-School Children Initiative, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/3) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/4);

(b) Independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/5) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/6).